



November 15, 2011

***Via Electronic Filing***

Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Notice of Oral *Ex Parte* Communications, WC Docket Nos. 11-42, 03-109; CC Docket No. 96-45**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On November 10, 2011, Sarah Morris, Policy Analyst at New America Foundation's Open Technology Initiative, and Greta Byrum, Policy Analyst at New America Foundation's Open Technology Initiative ("NAF"), met with Garnet Hanly at the Federal Communications Commission to discuss the Commission's proposed Lifeline Broadband Pilot Program. This notice is submitted in compliance with Section 1.1206(b) of the Commission's Rules.

In response to requests in both the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and the Further Inquiry for Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernizations for comment on a broadband pilot program<sup>1</sup>, NAF reiterated that a rigorous evaluation of the proposed pilot program is critical to effectively measure the impact of Commission funded broadband adoption efforts. Distinct from the evaluation of proposals submitted by ETCs, evaluation of the actual funded projects would allow the Commission to test hypotheses and facilitate the collection of meaningful data to determine whether the pilot program's approach was successful at increasing broadband adoption.

NAF, drawing on its experience as a BTOP program evaluator and additional work with BTOP partners, offered a study design in its comments with Benton Foundation and others for the Commission to use in its design of a broadband pilot program.<sup>2</sup> After receiving feedback

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<sup>1</sup> In the Matter of Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization, WC Docket Nos. 11-42, 03-109; CC Docket No. 96-45 at ¶ 279, *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, (rel. Mar. 4, 2011) ("NPRM"), noting that "[a] broadband pilot program could help us gather comprehensive and statistically significant data about the effectiveness of different approaches in making broadband more affordable for low-income Americans"; *Further Inquiry into Four Issues in the Universal Service Lifeline/Link Up Reform and Modernization Proceeding*, DA 11-1346, WC Docket Nos. 11-42, 03-109; CC Docket No. 96-45 at 1 (rel. Aug. 5, 2011) ("Further Inquiry"), seeking comment on "designing and implementing a Lifeline/Link Up broadband pilot program to evaluate whether and how Lifeline/Link Up can effectively support broadband adoption by low-income households."

<sup>2</sup> Comments of The Benton Foundation, The Open Technology Initiative at New America Foundation, Public Knowledge, United Church of Christ, OC Inc., The Center for Rural

from Commission staff, NAF drafted a more detailed document, which it presented to Ms. Hanly at the November 10<sup>th</sup> meeting and which is attached to this notice, that outlined existing federal means-tested programs and analyzed how those programs could instruct an evaluation of the broadband pilot program that is both robust and feasible.

NAF also emphasized that the Commission must consider evaluation at the outset of designing the program, including a determination of specific evaluative metrics and criteria, rather than wait until late in the process after proposals are solicited. The Commission must establish upfront a well-defined evaluation framework to allow for consistent measurement and data collection across all funded projects.

Pursuant to the Commission's rules, this notice is being filed in the above-referenced dockets for inclusion in the public record.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Sarah J. Morris

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CC: Garnet Hanly